

**Date:** October 16, 2012

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager  
**Through:** Keith Chadwell, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Marvin G. Williams, Director of Public Works  
Mark D. Ahrendsen, Director of Transportation  
**Subject:** DurhamWalks! Pedestrian Plan Update

### **Executive Summary**

The DurhamWalks! Pedestrian Plan was adopted by City Council in 2006. That same year, Council also adopted the Durham Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan. Both plans included a process for ranking the need for sidewalks and bicycle facilities along road corridors in Durham.

Several sidewalk projects in Durham have been completed in 2011 and 2012, and others are now under construction. These include standalone projects constructed by the City, and sidewalks constructed by NCDOT as part of roadway projects. In addition, the City has received funding to design and construct several sidewalk projects. Some of these projects also include bicycle facilities. These projects are listed in the attached presentation.

Among the funded projects are the four projects listed below. Council has an agenda item for this cycle to approve Horvath Associates to provide Engineering Services for "Functional Design Studies for Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Projects."

- Morreene Road from Erwin Road to Neal Road.
- Carpenter-Fletcher Road from Woodcroft Parkway to Alston Avenue.
- Cornwallis Road from South Roxboro Street to Chapel Hill Road.
- Hillandale Road from I-85 to NC-147.

Concerns were raised by Council at the August 9, 2012 Work Session on how the sidewalk petition process works in conjunction with the DurhamWalks! Pedestrian Plan and what the priorities for future sidewalk construction should be, as funding is extremely limited. The Grandale Drive sidewalk item that this discussion revolved around was referred back to the Administration and direction was given to bring the item back to Council with additional information pertaining to sidewalks. This item will be brought back to the November 20, 2012 Work Session.

### **Recommendation**

The Administration recommends that the City Council receive a report on the DurhamWalks! Pedestrian Plan.

### **Background**

Due to the absence of sidewalks at many locations throughout the City and the costs associated with constructing new sidewalks, the 2006 DurhamWalks! Pedestrian Plan included a process

for ranking new sidewalk locations. In 2011, at the request of City Council, this process was modified and sidewalks were re-ranked. A total of 235 street corridors were re-prioritized in 2011. Longer streets, such as Roxboro and Duke, were divided into smaller segments for the purpose of prioritization.

In 2011, at the request of City Council, the sidewalk ranking process was modified and sidewalks were re-prioritized. The 2011 staff report also provided the status of the top 52 ranked sidewalk projects. The status report was then used to develop the Unfunded Sidewalk Priority List, which was adopted by City Council and provides a list of 24 projects that will be designed and constructed as funds for new sidewalks become available.

The sidewalk prioritization process looks at several factors for each street corridor, including the proximity of schools, transit, parks, and trails; the level of traffic; the amount of existing sidewalk; surrounding land use; safety need; and public support. The prioritization process is a tool that helps to determine what order the city should construct sidewalks. The prioritization does not take into consideration other important factors, such as the availability of right-of-way, potential environmental constraints, or the degree of difficulty for construction. However, these factors are considered as funds become available and projects are selected for construction.

The Horvath agreement is for the consultant to provide Functional Design Studies for four new bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The design fees for these projects as well as the construction costs have been funded from various sources by the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO). Both the DurhamWalks! Pedestrian Plan and the Durham Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan, adopted in 2006, call for pedestrian and bicycle improvements to these corridors. The project is aimed at developing Functional designs, layout for standard five-foot (5') sidewalks, and adjacent bicycle lanes.

### **Issues/Analysis**

There has been little additional funding available over the past year to address projects on the Unfunded Construction Priority List. However, one project may receive funding. In the draft 2012-2020 State Transportation Improvement Program, NCDOT has funded a sidewalk on Duke Street from Murray Ave. to Roxboro Rd., in FY2020.

The DCHC MPO provides some of the funding needed by the City for pedestrian and bicycle projects, including the functional design studies discussed previously. The funding provided by the DCHC MPO has timelines associated with the use of the funds. The Transportation and Public Works departments are working together to move forward with the design and construction of these projects within the timelines.

### **Alternatives**

This is not applicable to this agenda item.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no direct cost associated with receiving this report. In November 2011 the City Council adopted the Unfunded Sidewalk Construction List; the "planning level" cost estimate for projects on the Unfunded Sidewalk Construction List is about \$14 million. Also note that the DCHC MPO and the N.C. Department of Transportation have approved funding for a number of other sidewalk and bicycle projects in Durham in addition to those discussed in this report.

**SDBE Summary**

The SDBE Summary is not applicable to this agenda item.

**Attachments**

Attachment: DurhamWalks! Pedestrian Plan Update, November 8, 2012 Presentation